



## Judaism in Ferrara

The main places of Jewish culture in Ferrara consist of the old ghetto area, where since 1627 Jewish people have been secluded, the Jewish cemeteries and the MEIS, National Museum of Judaism and Shoah, where the story of Ferrara and the Italian Jewish culture are gathered.

The historical streets of the ghetto were Via Mazzini - where the Jewish Community gathers in the building of the three synagogues - Via Vignatagliata and Via Vittoria. Everywhere these places recall the life and stories of the writer Giorgio Bassani.

There are also two Jewish cemeteries in Ferrara: the smallest one, closed to the public, was destined to bury the first 21 Spanish families who arrived in 1492. The second is in via delle Vigne and is one of the oldest Italian Jewish cemeteries still used today, where Giorgio Bassani rests.

### FROM THE ESTE CASTLE TO THE MEIS

#### 2 Muretto del Castello

Corso Martiri della Libertà

The plaques report the names of the 11 people killed on 15 November 1943 in front of the wall of the Castello Estense, in retaliation for the murder of the federal officer Igino Ghisellini.

#### 40 Colonna di Borso d'Este

The column with the statue of Borso d'Este in front of the Cathedral is mainly made up of broken tombstones coming from old Jewish cemeteries robbed in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

#### 41 Palazzo San Crispino

During the age of the ghetto, San Crispino oratory was the place of compulsory preaching, since Jewish people could access it without getting out of the ghetto.

#### 32 Porte del Ghetto – Beginning of Via Mazzini

The marble doors of via Mazzini were the biggest of five built in 1627; they marked the main road of the ghetto, they were closed at night and marked the separation between the Jewish Community and the rest of the city in the Papal era. They were finally dismantled in 1861.

#### 30 Sinagoghe e Museo della Comunità ebraica di Ferrara *(Temporarily closed)*

The large building of the Synagogues (the German, Italian and Fanese temples), built thanks to a rich banker from Rome, stands out because of the commemorative plaques by the entrance. In the historical building, the Museum of the Jewish community still holds liturgical objects, furniture from the 18<sup>th</sup> century and printed documents about the history and the tradition of the Jewish Community in Ferrara.

#### 42 Ex-scuola ebraica

The school in Via Vignatagliata 79 has been a kindergarten and



elementary school in the Jewish community of Ferrara since the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. Giorgio Bassani taught here.

#### 8 MEIS Museo Nazionale dell'Ebraismo Italiano e della Shoah

The MEIS has been created in order to offer the first organic showcase of the heritage and legacy of Italian Judaism, as well as an opportunity for knowledge, history, cultural identity and tourism. It contains 2,200 years of lively and uninterrupted presence of Jewish people in Italy, and was created in order to enhance their traditions and contribution to the history and the culture of this country. It will be completed in the near future, with the construction of the remaining modern buildings.

### FROM THE ESTE CASTLE TO THE JEWISH CEMETERY

#### 43 Caserma Bevilacqua

It hosted male Jewish prisoners, before being taken to the Fossoli camp (Modena, Italy) and from there to Auschwitz.

#### 44 Piccolo cimitero levantino *(Closed to the public)*

A private cemetery, it represents one of the few traces left by Sephardic Jews in Ferrara.

#### 35 Cimitero ebraico

The Jewish cemetery, immersed in the greenery of the Addizione Erculea close to the walls, contains tombs of high artistic value from the eighteenth to the twentieth century, the mortuary dedicated to the victims of deportations, and the funeral monument of the writer Giorgio Bassani, created by A. Pomodoro and P. Sartogo.



## Where the Po once flowed

Until the 12<sup>th</sup> century, the main branch of the Po, which today runs a few kilometres away to the north of the city, flowed past the southern walls where there was the river port, for a long time a busy commercial crossroads. The south of the city centre was the oldest part and extended along the banks of the river, where various streets, along which goods were taken to the marketplace, met with it. This area is still largely intact with striking views and important cultural and religious buildings. When the course of the main river was re-routed to the north of the city and the riverbed gradually narrowed, new buildings were erected and the Duke Borso included the area between the city walls, creating a new district.

#### 2 From Castello Estense

#### 24 Palazzo Municipale

#### 3 Cattedrale

#### 36 Piazza Trento Trieste

#### 25 Palazzo Paradiso

Former seat of the University, the palace now contains the "Ariostea" Library, the tomb of Ludovico Ariosto, and many important historical relics and works of art.

#### 45 Casa Minerbi -Dal Sale *(Closed to the public)*

The building is mainly famous for a series of frescoes from the 14<sup>th</sup> century. It is the location of the Centro di Studi Bassaniani (Centre of Bassaniani Studies).

#### 39 Mura – Porta San Pietro

#### 10 Monastero di Sant'Antonio in Polesine

Founded in the 13<sup>th</sup> century by Beata Beatrice d'Este, it has three chapels with precious frescoes from the Giotto and Byzantine schools, as well as from the Renaissance era.

#### 46 Baluardo dell'Amore – Archaeological park

#### 22 Palazzo Costabili – Museo Archeologico Nazionale

Also known as "Palace of Ludovico il Moro", the building dates back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century and it hosts the finds of the Etruscan city of Spina, which flourished from the 6<sup>th</sup> to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC. Particularly fascinating are the large symposium artefacts, one of the world's largest collections of red-figure Attic ceramics, and the precious jewellery made of gold, silver, amber and vitreous paste. Not to be missed are the rooms with frescoes by Garofalo and the garden in Renaissance revival style.

#### 6 Basilica – Monastero di San Giorgio

It was Ferrara's first cathedral from the 7<sup>th</sup> century AD and was rebuilt in the 15<sup>th</sup> century by Biagio Rossetti.

#### 38 Area Castrum Bizantino

The earliest settlement on the site of Ferrara. The layout of the streets draws a "horseshoe" shape and supports the hypothesis of the presence of a *castrum*, or military settlement, established by the Byzantines of Ravenna on the left bank of the river Po.



Visit  
**Ferrara**  
in brief

Ferrara, città del Rinascimento  
e il suo Delta del Po



**unesco**  
World Heritage Site

**FERRARA**  
FEELINGS

**IN FERRARA**





## The Mediaeval Centre

From the Middle Ages to today, the area around the Cathedral has always been the focus of the city life. The seat of the various rulers over the years and a commercial and historical area of great importance, the centre is still the favourite meeting place of residents and visitors alike. The original layout of the ancient city, which has been developing along the banks of the river Po, is still clearly recognisable in the famous area of Via delle Volte.

### 2 From Castello Estense

The Castle, built in 1385 to protect the Este family, still has the typical aspect of a medieval fortress, even though the marble balconies and the tower loggias remind us of the transformations of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, when the building became the new ducal palace. The Filippi School (16<sup>th</sup> century) painted the inside frescoes. It hosts temporary exhibitions.

### 24 Palazzo Municipale

Begun in 1245, it was the Este residence till the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Restored at the beginning of the last century in 14<sup>th</sup>-century style, it is now the seat of the Town Hall.

### 3 Cattedrale

The cathedral, dedicated to the patron saints of the city, George and Maurelius, is a harmonic unity of Romanesque solidity and exquisite Gothic elegance.

### 36 Piazza Trento e Trieste

Formerly called Piazza delle Erbe, it was for centuries the site of the city's main market. Today, it is the beating heart of the city and is characterised by a wide open space to the south of the Cathedral, overlooked by the south façade and the bell tower.

### 11 Museo della Cattedrale

The Cathedral Museum is located in the little church of San Romano and houses objects which once belonged to the cathedral like the ancient organ shutters by Cosmé Tura, the panels of the ancient Door of the Months, sculptures, statues and beautiful 16<sup>th</sup>-century tapestries.

### 33 Via delle Volte

A long stretch of the street is covered overhead by vaults that connect the two sides of the street and give it its unmistakable and fascinating character and appearance.

### 28 Mura – Porta Paula



## The Renaissance Addition

Throughout the Middle Ages and almost to the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the northern boundary of the city ran along the current road system of Viale Cavour – Corso Giovecca. To the north of this boundary there were a number of buildings, even prestigious ones, some of which were owned by the Duke. In 1492 Ercole I commissioned Biagio Rossetti to include this vast area in the city. The great architect and town planner designed a plan which, due to its original and rational nature, made Ferrara "the first modern city in Europe". In honour of the Duke who ordered its building this great district is known as "Addizione Erculeia".

### 2 From Castello Estense

### 21 Palazzo dei Diamanti

With its original façade covered with diamond-shaped stones, the palace is attributed to Biagio Rossetti. In the large rooms on the first floor, you can see the collections of the National Picture Gallery, while the Galleries of Modern and Contemporary Art, on the ground floor, house international art exhibitions.

### 1 Casa di Ludovico Ariosto (Out of the route)

The house, where the poet spent the last years of his life and devoted himself to the final edition of his famous poem "Orlando furioso", was built around 1528, probably on a project by architect Girolamo da Carpi. It houses documents and some of Ariosto's personal belongings.

### 29 Tempio di San Cristoforo alla Certosa

Built in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the great monastery was later enriched with the construction of the church of San Cristoforo, by Biagio Rossetti. Since the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it has become the city's monumental cemetery.



### 27 Mura – Porta degli Angeli

### 34 Piazza Ariostea

Large green area with the statue of L. Ariosto in the middle.

### 23 Palazzo Massari (Closed for restorations)

Built at the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century and enlarged in the last thirty years of the 18<sup>th</sup> century with the construction of the Palazzina dei Cavalieri di Malta, the complex is home to the Modern and Contemporary Art Galleries of Ferrara.

### 17 Orto botanico

The Botanical Garden is a scientific institution born within the University; a lot of plants, both in the open air and in greenhouses, are kept here.

### 4 Chiesa del Gesù

Built in 1570 to a design by Alberto Schiatti, it houses the "Mourning of Christ", a 15<sup>th</sup>-century sculpture in polychrome terracotta by Guido Mazzoni.

### 14 Museo Civico di Storia Naturale (Closed for restorations)

Particularly interesting for the collections covering all the realms of nature.

### 31 Teatro Comunale Claudio Abbado

Designed by Antonio Foschini at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, it is famous for the prose, ballet, opera and concert seasons. It is possible to visit it with a guide, on previous arrangement.



## Renaissance residences and churches

Along the ancient Via di San Francesco, the main thoroughfare of the new districts commissioned by Niccolò III and an elegant street in the Medieval city, stand many palaces, patrician residences and major churches. The itinerary winds among these wonders to the "Delizie", dwellings built by the court for amusement and relaxation, far from the rules of the state.

### 2 From Castello Estense

### 24 Palazzo Municipale

### 3 Cattedrale

### 5 Chiesa di San Francesco

In pure Renaissance style, the building is a masterpiece of Biagio Rossetti.

### 13 Museo di Casa Romei (Temporarily closed for restorations)

Casa Romei is an outstanding example of a building built between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. On the ground floor are extraordinary late Gothic and Renaissance decorations: the Hall of the Sibyl and the Hall of the Prophets. Other rooms house a sculpture museum. On the first floor, the elegant apartment, partly renovated during the 16<sup>th</sup> century, contains refined decorations and frescoes from important buildings in Ferrara.

### 9 Monastero del Corpus Domini

It keeps the memories of Santa Caterina Vegri together with some tombs of the Este family: among them, the tomb of Lucrezia Borgia.

### 7 Chiesa di Santa Maria in Vado

Majestic temple built around the little vault stained with the Sacred Blood sprayed from the Holy Host in 1171. It contains frescos by Carlo Bononi.

### 26 Palazzo Schifanoia

A palace built for the amusement of the ducal family, Schifanoia contains the famous Hall of the Months, painted between 1469 and 1470 by Francesco del Cossa, Ercole de' Roberti and other artists of the "Officina Ferrarese", where the frescoes and the Room of the Stuccoes, with its ceiling shining with gold, remind us of a period of luxury and culture.

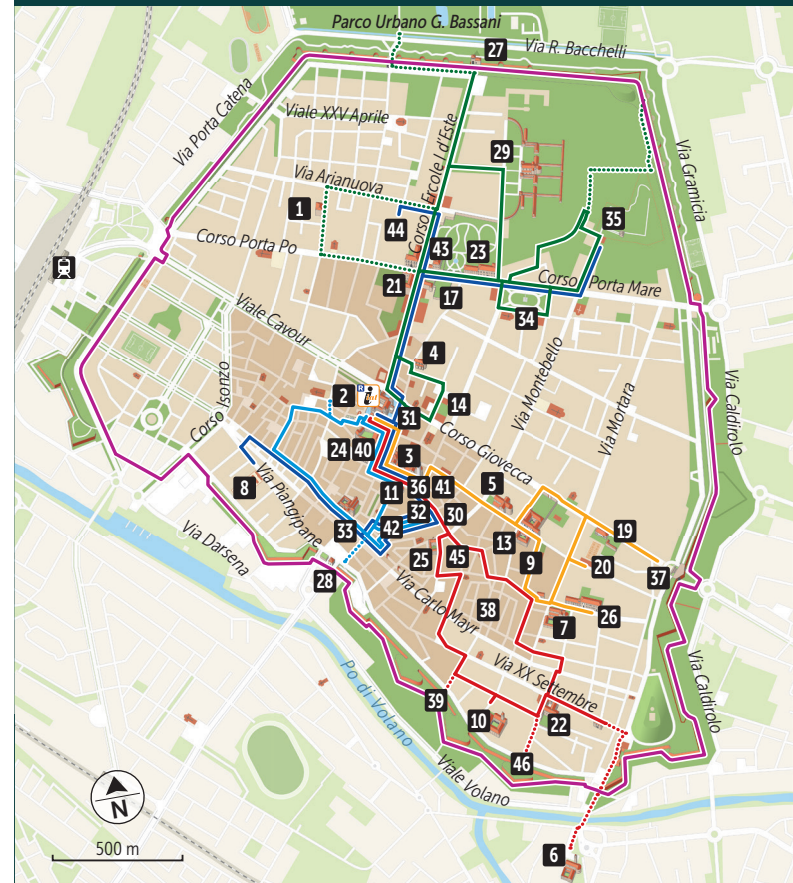
### 20 Palazzo Bonacossi

Built in 1468, the palace hosts temporary art collections.

### 19 Palazzina Marfisa d'Este

An example of a stately residence from the 16<sup>th</sup> century where decorated ceilings and precious antiques can be admired in its rooms.

### 37 Mura – Punta della Giovecca



The detailed map of the town and the opening hours for museums, churches and monuments are available at:

**TOURIST INFORMATION OFFICE**

Castello Estense  
tel. +39 0532 419190  
infotur@comune.fe.it  
[www.ferrarainfo.com/ferrara](http://www.ferrarainfo.com/ferrara)

**COMUNE DI FERRARA**  
Servizio Cultura, Turismo  
e rapporti con UNESCO  
Via Giuoco del Pallone, 15  
tel. 0532 418305

